

Amend the claims in accordance with the following listing of claims:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Withdrawn) A method of preparing a surface crosslinked superabsorbent-containing composite, the method comprising:
  - (a) introducing at least one particle of at least one coating material into a flowing gas stream, the flowing gas stream moving the coating material through a zone where an association agent and a crosslinking reagent are applied to the coating material;
  - (b) introducing at least one particle of at least one superabsorbent material into the flowing gas stream; and
  - (c) maintaining the flowing gas stream until the superabsorbent material is covered with at least a first layer of the coating material.
2. (Withdrawn) A surface crosslinked superabsorbent-containing composite prepared according to the method of claim 1.
3. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1, wherein the flowing gas stream comprises air.
4. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 3, further comprising (d) heating the flowing gas stream to an elevated temperature sufficient to effect crosslinking on at least a portion of the surface of the superabsorbent-containing composite.
5. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1, wherein the coating material comprises a hydrophilic material
6. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 5, wherein the coating material comprises a cellulosic material.

7. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 5, further comprising (d) heating the flowing gas stream to an elevated temperature sufficient to effect crosslinking on at least a portion of the surface of the superabsorbent-containing composite.
8. (Withdrawn) A surface crosslinked superabsorbent-containing composite prepared according to the method of claim 4.
9. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1, wherein the coating material comprises a silicate.
10. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 9, further comprising (d) heating the flowing gas stream to an elevated temperature sufficient to effect crosslinking on at least a portion of the surface of the superabsorbent-containing composite.
11. (Withdrawn) A surface crosslinked superabsorbent-containing composite prepared according to the method of claim 10
12. (Original) A method of preparing a surface crosslinked superabsorbent-containing composite, the method comprising:
- (a) introducing at least one particle of at least one coating material into a flowing gas stream;
  - (b) introducing at least one particle of at least one superabsorbent material into the flowing gas stream, the flowing gas stream moving the superabsorbent material and the coating material through a zone where an association agent and a crosslinking reagent are applied to the superabsorbent material and the coating material; and
  - (c) maintaining the flowing gas stream until the superabsorbent material is covered with at least a first layer of the coating material.
13. (Withdrawn) A surface crosslinked superabsorbent-containing composite prepared according to the method of claim 12.

14. (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein the flowing gas stream comprises air.
15. (Original) The method of claim 14, further comprising (d) heating the flowing gas stream to an elevated temperature sufficient to effect crosslinking on at least a portion of the surface of the superabsorbent-containing composite.
16. (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein the coating material comprises a hydrophilic material.
17. (Original) The method of claim 16, wherein the coating material comprises a cellulosic material.
18. (Original) The method of claim 16, further comprising (d) heating the flowing gas stream to an elevated temperature sufficient to effect crosslinking on at least a portion of the surface of the superabsorbent-containing composite.
19. (Withdrawn) A surface crosslinked superabsorbent-containing composite prepared according to the method of claim 15.
20. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 12, wherein the coating material comprises a silicate.
21. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 20, further comprising (d) heating the flowing gas stream to an elevated temperature sufficient to effect crosslinking on at least a portion of the surface of the superabsorbent-containing composite.
22. (Withdrawn) A surface crosslinked superabsorbent-containing composite prepared according to the method of claim 21.